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MILTON'S HISTORY OF BRITAIN

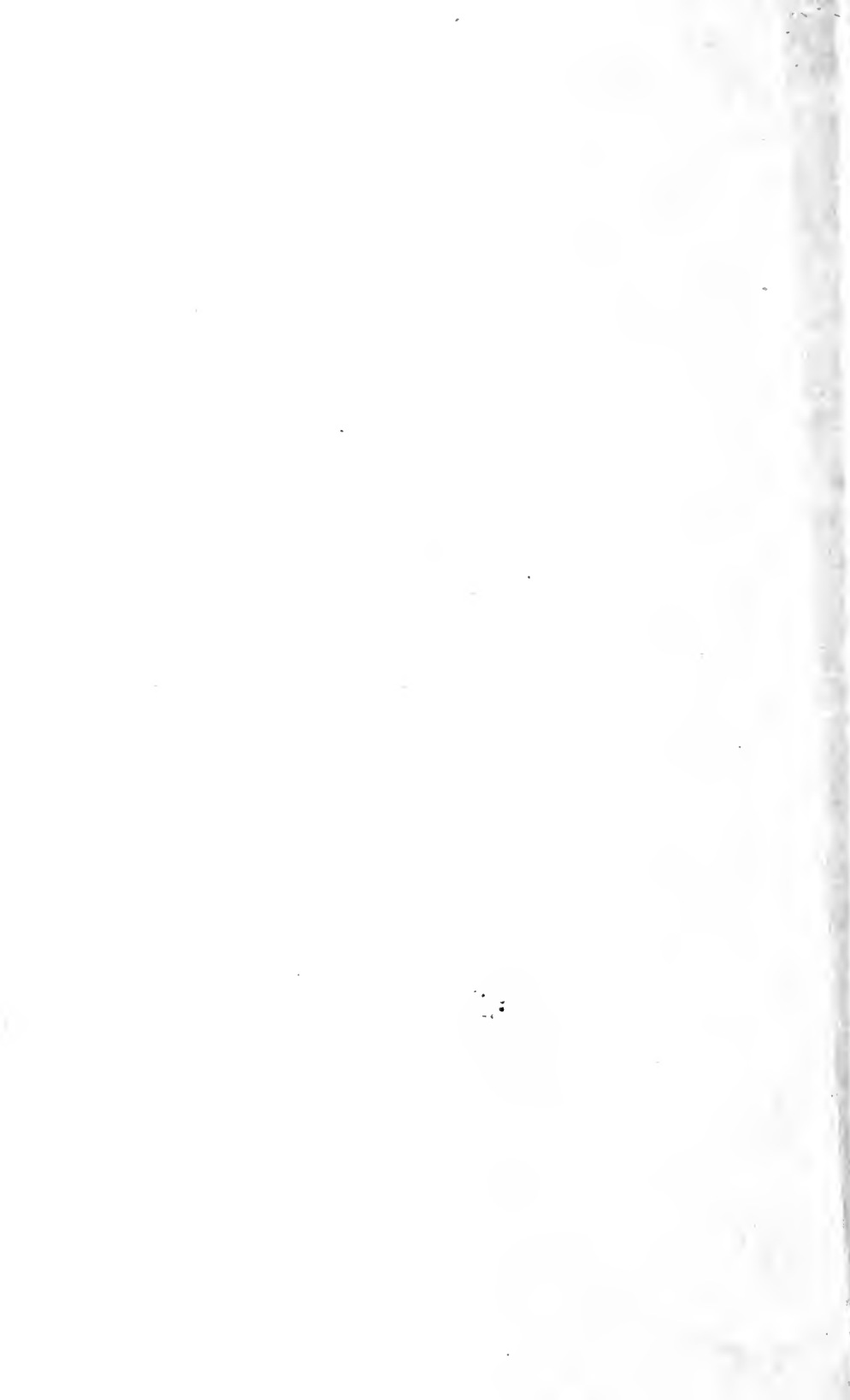
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THE SOURCES OF MILTON'S *HISTORY OF BRITAIN*¹

HARRY GLICKSMAN

Milton's sources for his *History of Britain* were of two principal kinds. There were, first, those general compilations, written during or near his own time, in which the authorities for early English history were presented to him in an intermediate manner, and only after free handling by their interpreters. Secondly, there were those mediæval sources which, sometimes in a strict, and at other times in a more liberal sense may be called original.

Milton consulted works of the former class when he encountered a period for which a large number of separate authorities offered distinct contributions. He discovered, for example, that after the retirement of Agricola and until the fall of Rome, he would be obliged to piece together a structure of fact derived from a bewildering array of authors—among them Eutropius, Dion, Spartianus, Capitolinus, Eumenius, Zosimus, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Victor Aurelius.² With that prospect, he turned to the exhaustive *De Primordiis* of Usher,³ published in 1639, which had, for several years before its appearance, been eagerly awaited by antiquarian

¹ *The History of Britain, That part especially now call'd England*. From the first Traditional Beginning, continu'd to the Norman Conquest. Collected out of the antientest and best Authours thereof by John Milton. London. Printed by J. M. for James Allestry, at the Rose and Crown in St Paul's Church-Yard, MDCLXX.

For helpful advice and suggestive material I acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor Albert S. Cook, of Yale University, under whose supervision I made a special study of the *History of Britain* during the academic year 1917-18.

² See pp. 219 ff. Throughout this article, a page citation is to be regarded, in the absence of other data, as a reference to Milton's *History of Britain* in Vol. V of the Bohn edition of the Prose Works.

³ James Usher (or Ussher), Archbishop of Armagh (1581-1656). The work is known both as *Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates* and as *De Britannicarum Ecclesiarum Primordiis*.

scholars. For its ecclesiastical data Milton had little regard, but mingled with these he would find material of a political character that could readily serve his ends. The treatise on the Roman occupation in Camden's *Britannia* was another valuable work; and in two instances Milton renders it plain, by marginal references, that only through Camden's conspectus has he found his way to the original sources.⁴ For this period, also, he must have summoned the help of the painstaking Speed, who, with his abundant citations, doubtless recalled the days of the *Commonplace Book*; the elaborate description of British manners and customs in the Second Book, for instance, shows resemblance, in many features, to a chapter on the same subject in Speed's work.⁵ The use of a conspectus is likewise indicated in the Third Book, especially for the period dealing with the Britons' resistance to the Teutonic invaders. Here one meets the names of Paulus Diaconus, Blondus, Sabellicus, Constantius, Sigonius, Widukind, and Sigebert,⁶ each of whom makes a relatively insignificant contribution; and the direct marginal references to Usher's work⁷ enhance the probability that it was employed as a *vade mecum*. It was largely to Usher, though in part also to Camden and Speed, that Milton seems to have owed his knowledge of the early British chronicler Nennius, whose *Historia*, which did not appear in print until 1691, he used freely.⁸ The digests of modern writers were resorted to, moreover, for the legendary material, which Milton examined with sceptical scrutiny. He called Holinshed into service

⁴ Pp. 227-9.

⁵ Pp. 197-8; see also Speed, *History Great Brit.*, ed. 1627, pp. 166 ff.

⁶ Pp. 241 ff.

⁷ Pp. 245, 251, 256.

⁸ The following letter from Usher to Sir Simonds D'Ewes is contained in Farr, *Life and Letters of James Usher* (p. 506).

Quo tempore & Ninium, (ita enim appello, & vetustissimi codicis auctoritatem, & nominis ejusdem in Ninia, & Niniano expressa vestigia, secutus) cum variis MSS. à me non indiligenter comparatum, tecum sum communicaturus; ut Exemplaria Cottoniana (quibus in hac ipsa collatione ego sum usus) denuò consulere necesse non habeas. Nam ad diplomata Anglo-Saxonica quod attinet: non in uno aliquo volumine simul collecta, sed per varios illius Bibliothecæ libros dispersa ea fuisse animadverti, de quibus in unum corpus compingendis, dabitur (ut spero) opportunus tecum

at an early point,⁹ and there is clear evidence that he consulted Stow in recounting the adventures of Ebranc and Brutus.¹⁰ It may be safely assumed, indeed, that Milton, throughout the work, bore in mind the plan and the treatment of Holinshed, of Stow, and of Speed, who were generously represented in the *Commonplace Book*.¹¹ To them, notably Speed, he could revert at any time to learn what sources were likely to provide the most reliable information, and the widest range of it, for a given period.

The foregoing suggests an important fact. Milton's employment of the works of modern compilers never enslaved him. He is always to be conceived as dividing his attention—or as instructing his readers and amanuenses to divide theirs—between the conspectus on the one hand, and the original authority on the other. He has Holinshed, Stow, and Speed at his elbow while he composes the First Book, but he knows that Geoffrey, for a half-historical and half-poetical purpose like that at hand, is the best of the mediæval chroniclers. He

coram consultandi locus; Interim ut egregiis tuis conatibus Deus adsit & benedicat, summis votis exoptat qui

Londini, xii Kal. Jul.

An M. D C. X L.

Ex. animo tuus est,

Ja. Armachanus.

Cf. Nennius, ed. Stevenson, pp. xix-xx. On Usher's interest in early English history, see Adams, *Old English Scholarship*, p. 115.

⁹ P. 167.

¹⁰ Pp. 174-5; see also Stow, *Annales*, ed. 1631, p. 9.

¹¹ For a discussion of this topic, see Charles H. Firth, *Milton as an Historian, Proceedings of the British Academy for 1907-8*.

Fueter (*Geschichte der neueren Historiographie*, p. 166) implies that Firth's treatment is inadequate, since the latter compares Milton with only these three chroniclers. Fueter's criticism is unjust. Holinshed, Stow, and Speed were, as Firth shows, the modern English historians whom Milton had read with special attention; there is hence a special interest in comparing him with them.

On Milton's relatively sceptical and scientific attitude toward the legendary material, see Firth, pp. 233-6. Of special interest is his comment on the handling of the Arthurian story:

"Milton's treatment of the Arthurian legend is a still more interesting example of the progress of scepticism. The three chroniclers who were the standard historians of Milton's time all doubted the details of the legend, but believed that Arthur was a real king who gained genuine victories. 'Of this Arthur,' says Holinshed's *Chronicle*, 'many things are written beyond credit, for that there is no ancient author of authority that confirmeth the same; but surely as may be thought he was some worthy

consequently follows him page by page. When, in the Second Book, he takes up the *De Primordiis* of Usher, he does not limit himself to the scope of that history. Usher's scrupulous respect for ecclesiastical records would persuade Milton to pay him no more than a grudging heed. He therefore makes examination, on his own account, of Ammianus Marcellinus and Dion, of Zosimus and Orosius.¹² The employment of Usher's volume in the Third Book, in like manner, cannot preclude him from consulting Malmesbury, Huntingdon, Bede, and Gildas, with all of whom he has independent acquaintance, relying upon them, in fact, in other parts of his history.¹³

man, and by all likelihood a great enemy to the Saxons, by reason whereof the Welshmen, which are the very Britons indeed, have him in famous remembrance.' Then at great length he relates the legendary life and exploits of the hero (Holinshed, *Chronicles*, ed. 1587, bk. 1, pp. 90-3).

"Stow is briefer, but adopts much the same position. 'Of this Arthur there be many fabulous reports, but certain he was (saith William of Malmesbury) a prince more worthy to have advancement by true histories than false fables, being the only prop and upholder of his country.' He supports the truth of the story by identifying the sites of Mon Badonicus and the Castle of Camelot, and describing the remains found there (Stow, *Chronicle*, ed. 1631, pp. 53-5). The critical Speed quotes Malmesbury too, and condemns Geoffrey of Monmouth for discrediting the truth about Arthur by his toys and tales. 'Of his person,' he concludes, 'we make no doubt, though his acts have been written with too lavish a pen' (Speed, *History of Great Britain*, ed. 1632, p. 271).

"Milton is much more thoroughgoing. All that happened about that time is doubtful. 'The age whereof we now write hath had the ill hap more than any since the first fabulous times, to be surcharged with all the idle fancies of posterity.' He introduces Arthur by describing him as a British leader, 'more renowned in songs and romances than true stories.' With real insight he dismisses at once the mediæval fictions and examines the account of Nennius as the only evidence of any real value."

Firth's article, which contains an elaborate treatment of sources, discusses the relation of the *History* to certain additional fields of interest—to Milton's biography and personality, his thought and scholarship; to the literary and philosophical influences which operated upon the composition and content of the work; and to the political and ecclesiastical environment of Milton's age.

With respect to the sources, the present article, which includes some of Firth's material, aims to supplement his treatment by discussing (1) the comparative attention which Milton gave to his several authorities, and the relative degrees in which he employed modern compilations and original sources; (2) the extent to which he put himself in touch with the accessible authorities; (3) the relation of the *History* to Wheloc's Anglo-Saxon scholarship; (4) the use of chronological data; and, especially, (5) Milton's art as a translator from Latin into English.

¹² Pp. 223, 229, 233.

¹³ Pp. 250 ff.

Milton's tendency, in a word, is not to put his trust in other men's research, nor to view the original sources through the medium of digests and synopses; it is rather to make these cumulative writings serve the ultimate authorities as supplements and aids. In this fashion he uses Higden's *Polychronicon*, Spelman's *Concilia*, and Calvisius' *Opus Chronologicum*.¹⁴ His impatience with tradition and precedent is typical of his character. He aims, accordingly, to depend as little as possible on those intermediate and superfluous steps which intervene between himself and the original, and he ignores them wherever he reasonably can. There are, it is true, cases in which he is practically compelled to consult modern historical specialists, but here he manifests similar intolerance. He feels bound, for instance, to recognize in Camden the most authoritative English geographer of his age, and he consequently cites the *Britannia* whenever questions of topography arise.¹⁵ But he takes pains to notify his readers that he finds it distasteful and beside the purpose "to wrinkle the smoothness of history with rugged names of places unknown, better harped at in Camden and other chorographers."¹⁶ For occasional bits of Scottish history, or for points of contact between the English annals and the Scottish, he turns to Buchanan's *Rerum Scoticarum Historia*, but the fanciful accounts of that uncritical historian, whom he taxes with paraphrasing "the fables of his predecessor Boethius," invariably repel him.¹⁷ It is curious, in the light of this unmitigated censure, that he distinguishes Buchanan with any mention whatever. The circumstance is probably to be explained by his conscientious and scholarly resolve to gather the accessible data, those both of higher and of lower merit, for his readers' individual inspection, and partly, it is feared, by the irrepressible desire to display his contempt for Scottish historical writing. Even more surprising is his use of the Dutch-Danish Pontanus, from whose *Rerum Dani-*

¹⁴ Pp. 213, 259, 273, 308.

¹⁵ *E. g.*, pp. 188, 255, 266, 274, 297, 319, 328, 362, 383.

¹⁶ P. 299.

¹⁷ Pp. 242, 261, 305, 331.

carum Historia he strives, with frail success, to develop a harmonious statement of the Scandinavian ravages.¹⁸ There is here, also, a strong intimation that Milton, in spite of his stern judgment on the writer, regarded it as too radical and arbitrary to overlook him altogether. Though he "contributes nothing,"¹⁹ it is the part of wisdom and sound scholarship to record that he has been searched.

Milton's usual practice, however, is to take his material from the early authorities. He attempts to discover the "ancientest author,"²⁰ and this done, he addresses himself to the task of determining in what manner his successors have supplemented or repudiated him. He shows his discrimination at the very outset. He knows that behind Geoffrey lie the fables of Nennius;²¹ he is also aware that Geoffrey's account is presented, in substance, by the later Matthew of Westminster.²² Yet in the version of Geoffrey, whom he declares to be "the principal author,"²³ he sees the most promising fund for the treatment of the centuries preceding Cæsar's invasion. Since he knows little or nothing of the more recent science of ethnology, since the terms Celtic, Gaelic, and Cymric cannot signify to him what they do to subsequent scholars, he must rest content with the most intelligible and consistent exposition of the old fables and half-truths that he can find. Though he condemns Geoffrey for his simplicity,²⁴ there is the conviction that he, of all the earlier writers, will offer the best material. Varying the narrative with references to Cæsar, Mela, Nennius, Virunnius, Gildas, and Florus;²⁵ with borrowings, as indicated above, from modern English commentators; and with one quotation, by

¹⁸ Pp. 301, 309, 317-8, 347.

¹⁹ P. 347.

²⁰ See mention of Bede on p. 221.

²¹ See p. 167.

²² See Gross, *Sources and Lit. Eng. Hist.*, p. 362.

²³ P. 168.

²⁴ Pp. 220-1, 243.

²⁵ Pp. 165, 166, 167, 171, 179, 180. The reference to Florus seems traceable to Camden. Milton's passage reads (p. 180): "Thus much is more generally believed, that both this Brennus, and another famous captain, Britomarus, whom the epitomist Florus and others mention, were not Gauls, but Britains: the name of the first in that tongue signifying a

way of tribute, from the verses of his admired Spenser,²⁶ he clings to Geoffrey's story through the whole of the First Book. In no other part of the *History* does he employ a source so freely for the same number of consecutive pages.²⁷

When Milton reaches the Second Book, he has his first opportunity to make known what he really believes about the use of historical authorities. He is now within grasp of authentic records; he pauses to reflect that "great acts and great eloquence have most commonly gone hand in hand";²⁸ and he forthwith devotes himself to what he calls the "transcription" of the Roman writers. The works of historians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries might have supplied him with a large proportion of the data affecting the period from Cæsar's first invasion to the end of Agricola's governorship; but the scruples of the true scholar direct him to ascertain whether "aught by diligence may be added or omitted, or by other disposing may be more explained or more expressed."²⁹ For Cæsar's British campaigns he follows the *De Bello Gallico* faithfully, though with ample regard for English idiom,³⁰ using Suetonius, Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, Dion, Pliny, and Bede for only supplementary and confirmatory minutiae.³¹ Recognizing that the first century after Christ is known mainly through Dion's *Historia*, and through the *Annales* and the *Vita Agricola* of Tacitus,³² he

king, and of the other a great Britain." Cf. *Britannia*, ed. Gough, I. lxxii-iii: "And some think they can easily prove king Brennus, so famous in Greek and Latin historians, to have been a Britan. Thus much I know, that this name is not yet worn out among the Britans, who call a king in their language *Brennin*. The name shews *Britomarus*, general among them mentioned by Florus and Appian, to have been a Britan, his name importing *Great Briton*."

²⁶ P. 175. The verses are found in *F. Q.* 2. 10. 24.

²⁷ Specimens of Milton's translation of Geoffrey's text, with the Latin in parallel columns, are found below, pp. 125-9.

²⁸ P. 185.

²⁹ P. 186.

³⁰ See, for example, below, p. 130.

³¹ Pp. 186, 188, 189, 192, 195, 196.

³² The following is of interest as an illustration of Milton's close but idiomatic rendering of Tacitus:

Britannorum acies in speciem simul
ac terrorem editoribus locis con-
stiterat ita, ut primum agmen in
aequo, ceteri per adclive iugum

The British powers on the hill side,
as might best serve for show and
terror, stood in their battalions;
the first on even ground, the next

conexi velut insurgerent; media campi cōvinnarius eques strepitu ac discursu complebat. tum Agricola superante hostium multitudine veritus, ne in frontem simul et latera suorum pugnaretur, diductis ordinibus, quamquam porrectior acies futura erat et arcessendas plerique legiones admonebant, promptior in spem et firmus adversis, dimisso equo pedes ante vexilla constitit (*Vit. Agric.*, ed. Furneaux, pp. 142-3).

It is enlightening, also, to compare the close translation of Dion in Petrie's *Monumenta Historica Britannica (Ex Scriptoribus Græcis etc.*, p. liv) with Milton's more independent, though accurate, rendering.

Plautius, therefore, had much difficulty in seeking them out; but when he did discover them, as they were not independent but subject to different kings, he overcame first Cataratacus, then Togodumnus, the sons of Cynobellinus, who was now dead. These taking to flight, he brought a part of the Boduni, who were under the dominion of the Catuellani, to terms of peace. Here leaving a garrison, he proceeded farther. But when they arrived at a certain river, which the barbarians supposed the Romans could not pass without a bridge, and in consequence had taken up their position carelessly on the opposite bank, he sends forward the Celti, who, even armed, were accustomed to swim with ease over the most rapid rivers; who, attacking them contrary to their expectation, wounded not the men indeed, but the horses which drew their chariots; which being thrown into confusion, they who rode therein were no longer secure. Next he sent over Flavius Vespasianus, who afterwards enjoyed the supreme rule, and his brother Sabinus as next in command; these also, having passed the river at a certain place, killed many of the barbarians by surprise. The rest, however, did not fly, but the following day again maintained the conflict nearly on equal terms, until Cneius Osidius Geta, though

rising behind, as the hill ascended. The field between rung with the noise of horsemen and chariots ranging up and down. Agricola doubting to be overwinged, stretches out his front, though somewhat with the thinnest, insomuch that many advised to bring up the legions: yet he not altering, alights from his horse, and stands on foot before the ensigns (p. 217).

Plautius, after much trouble to find them out, encountering first with Caractacus, then with Togodumnus, overthrew them; and receiving into conditions part of the Boduni, who then were subject to the Catuellani, and leaving there a garrison, went on toward a river: where the Britons not imagining that Plautius without a bridge could pass, lay on the further side careless and secure. But he sending first the Germans, whose custom was, armed as they were, to swim with ease the strongest current, commands them to strike especially at the horses, whereby the chariots, wherein consisted their chief art of fight, became unserviceable. To second them he sent Vespasian, who in his latter days obtained the empire, and Sabinus his brother; who unexpectedly assailing those who were least aware, did much execution. Yet not for this were the Britons dismayed; but reuniting the next day, fought with such courage, as made it hard to decide which way hung the victory: till Caius Sidius Geta, at point to have been taken, recovered himself so valiantly, as brought the day on his side; for which at Rome he received high honours (pp. 200-1).

assigns to those works the largest share of his attention, availing himself, however, of Orosius,³³ Suetonius, the *Historia* of Tacitus, Eutropius, and in one instance even of a Juvenalian satire, for the filling in and corroboration of his account.³⁴ After the recall of Agricola he turned for special guidance to the modern writers, in whose works he could find references to the *Historia Augusta*, Eumenius, Ammianus, Prosper Tiro, Zosimus, Procopius, and Socrates.³⁵ Arrived at the end of the Roman occupation, he must take leave of the Greek and Roman historians, and rely on the only original sources, with the exception of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, that are offered him—the chronicles of the monks. “Yet these guides,” he comments resignedly, “where can be had no better, must be followed.”³⁶ The language then ensuing augurs plainly what Milton’s policy is to be. “In gross,” he asserts, referring to the quality of the monkish sources, “it may be true enough; in circumstances³⁷ each man, as his judgment gives him, may reserve his faith, or bestow it.” Since the details submitted by the monks need the narrowest scrutiny, their writings, Milton would argue, must be ex-

in imminent danger of being made prisoner, ultimately so completely defeated them, that he received triumphal honours, although he had not yet served the office of consul.

³³ Milton was sometimes constrained to adopt inaccurate references. Citing Paulus Orosius in support of the statement that “Cæsar in his first journey, entertained with a sharp fight, lost no small number of his foot, and by tempest nigh all of his horse” (pp. 196–7), he remarks that Orosius “took what he wrote from a history of Suetonius now lost.” For Orosius’ statement as to Cæsar’s first journey, see Orosius, *Historiarum adversum Paganos Libri* vii, ed. Zangemeister, p. 377. That he believed he was following Suetonius in his account of Cæsar is made clear by a previous passage: “Hanc historiam Suetonius Tranquillus plenissime explicuit, cuius nos, competentes portiunculas decerpimus” (*ibid.*, p. 369). Suetonius, in fact, furnishes no such data. The conclusion is that Orosius, using a contraction of Cæsar’s *Commentaries*, mistook Cæsar for Suetonius. Milton was evidently misled by Orosius’ error, inferring that the mysterious work of Suetonius had been lost. See Reifferscheid, *Remains of Suetonius*, p. 471.

³⁴ Pp. 196, 199, 207, 219.

³⁵ The ecclesiastical historian.

³⁶ P. 235.

³⁷ The first edition (1670) reads *circumstance*.

amined as a whole, and every one in comparison with every other. This theory is actually applied in the Third Book. Along with Gildas, the earliest of British historians, who furnishes him with much material, he considers Bede, who follows two centuries later, and their followers—Malmesbury, the imaginary Matthew of Westminster, Huntingdon, and Florence. With Usher's *De Primordiis* ready at hand, he is still sensible of the higher value of original authorities; and with these early sources before him, he is conscious that they must be treated as checks and balances upon each other.

In passing from the Teutonic conquest to the Christianization of England,³⁸ Milton encounters a monk whom, in spite of anti-monastic prejudice, he sincerely respects. The *Ecclesiastical History* of the Venerable Bede, with its strong flavor of "superstition and monastical affectation,"³⁹ is not, to be sure, the kind of work that Milton would select, had he the choice of his sources. Complaining in one breath that he is uncertain "whether Bede was wanting to his matter, or his matter to him,"⁴⁰ he acknowledges in the next that the absence of that author will, for the interval ending at the "Danish Invasion,"⁴¹ be felt keenly. His attitude towards this standard history is, in practical effect, one of honest appreciation. In the presence of Bede, as in that of Cæsar and Tacitus, he realizes that he has come into contact with an ultimate source. Although he ignores most of the recitals of miraculous intervention, and the long accounts of ecclesiastical councils, he recognizes that he must delve in chapters full of such material, in order to construct a reliable version of the history of the Heptarchy for the seventh century and the first third of the eighth. The contributions of subsequent authorities, such as Malmesbury, Huntingdon, Florence, Matthew of Westminster, and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, are only incidental. But those and others like them are, after Bede's departure, the sources in which Milton

³⁸ Pp. 267 ff.

³⁹ P. 295.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

must repose his faith. It is a dismal prospect he now sees. Some comfort he finds in the "style and judgment"⁴² of Malmesbury, but apart from him he anticipates little except the irresponsible "conjectures and surmises" of the commentators on the "obscure and blockish chronicles." For the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, though in large measure an original authority, offers only spasmodic help. Wheloc's imperfect Latin translation interfered somewhat with intelligent study of this valuable text;⁴³ there seems to have been the thought, besides, that even in its clearest passages it stood in constant need of interpretation. It is charged that the compilers are "ill-gifted with utterance,"⁴⁴ and, in one instance, that they "deliver their meaning with more than wonted infancy."⁴⁵ If he places little trust in the "chief fountain" of his story, as he terms the *Chronicle*,⁴⁶ he reposes

⁴² P. 295.

⁴³ Abraham Wheloc's edition of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* appeared in 1643. To those unfamiliar with Anglo-Saxon the printing of the *Chronicle* was an occasion of special importance; for by the side of the original text was a Latin translation. As to Wheloc, see Eleanor N. Adams, *Old English Scholarship in England from 1566-1800*.

It is clear that Milton, apparently unable to read or understand the Anglo-Saxon, relied upon the Latin. He charges the chronicler with running into "extravagant fancies and metaphors" in his version of the Battle of Brunanburh. Wheloc, indeed, confesses his helplessness before the task of translating the ballad account of the battle, and feels obliged to add the following marginal note for the year 938: "Idioma hic et ad annum 942 et 975 perantiquum et horridum lectoris candorem et diligentiam desiderat." Cf. *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 1. CXXVIII. Wuelcker (*Cædmon und Milton, Angl.* 4.404) enlists Milton's disregard of the ballad to prove that he was not familiar with Anglo-Saxon.

The chronicler, wishing to name the place of Eadred's death, says simply: "On Frome" (*Sax. Chron.* 1. 112). Wheloc misinterpreted the phrase, translating it "In ætatis vigore" (*ibid.*, ed. Wheloc, p. 558). Milton, following Wheloc's Latin, says of Eadred that he sickened "in the flower of his youth" (p. 339). Wheloc was evidently misled by the Anglo-Saxon adjective *from* (*freom*), meaning "strong," "abundant," "virtuous."

Again, Wheloc writes "tum exercitus *Ite domum* vociferatur," in an attempt to render "þa se fyrðstern for ham." See *Sax. Chron.* 1. 103; *ibid.* 2. CXXVIII, note 5; *ibid.*, ed. Wheloc, p. 553. Milton writes unsuspectingly: "Whereat the king's soldiers joyfully cried out to be dismissed home" (p. 330).

⁴⁴ P. 324.

⁴⁵ P. 318.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

even less in its interpreters, nearly all of them monks, of whom he contemptuously observes that they "gloss and comment at their pleasure."⁴⁷ Approaching his material in such a spirit, it is little wonder that, instead of casting his lot with any one writer, he searches among them all, convinced that the best is bad enough. To Simeon of Durham's *Historia Regum*, which became available in print at the appearance of Twysden's *Scriptores Decem* in 1652, and presented the annals in a reasonably clear and objective manner, he gives a certain preference.⁴⁸ It is evident, in the last analysis, however, that from Simeon he derives little more than a *prima facie* version. He borrows copiously from him, but only after weighing him with one or more of a number of others, with the *Chronicle*, Ethelwerd, Malmesbury, Florence, Huntingdon, Hoveden, Ingulf, and the *Flores* of the so-called Matthew of Westminster.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Pp. 296 ff. Firth (p. 230) correctly assumes that Milton used this edition of Simeon, calling attention to the fact that that author is referred to not only in the last two Books, the Fifth and Sixth, but also towards the end of the Fourth (see references to Simeon beginning on p. 296). This circumstance sheds light upon a biographical passage in the *Second Defense* wherein Milton relates that he had hoped, after the establishment of the Commonwealth, to be released from engagements in the public behalf, and that he then turned his attention to continuing the *History*, which, he declares, was to be "from the earliest times to the present period" (Bohn 1. 261). "I had already finished four books," he adds, "when . . . I was surprised by an invitation from the council of state, who desired my services in the office for foreign affairs." He refers to his appointment, in March 1649, as Secretary for Foreign Tongues. Since there is clear evidence of the use of Simeon in the Fourth Book, it is to be inferred that what Milton in 1649—and until 1654, the date of the publication of the *Second Defense*—regarded as the end of the Fourth Book, was a point at or about p. 296 of the Bohn text, where he is taking reflective leave of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, and is looking forward, with no little misgiving, to the authority of the later monks. About six years after, instead of beginning the Fifth Book at that point, he merely continued the Fourth, including in the latter the new material from Simeon which had become accessible during the interval.

⁴⁹ For the period of the Saxon Heptarchy, however, Milton's several authorities gave him only meagre satisfaction. "Such bickerings to recount, met often in these our writers, what more worth is it," he queries, "than to chronicle the wars of kites or crows, flocking and fighting in the air?" (p. 304).

Milton continues, indeed, during the remainder of the work, to exercise this caution. At the same time, he is not precluded from laying additional stress, wherever it is merited, on a given authority. For the reign of Alfred and the events immediately preceding it, he summons the aid of Asser; during the succeeding half-century⁵⁰ he avails himself largely of the *Chronicle*,⁵¹ but never in entire disregard of its commentators; for whole portions of the reigns of Ethelred the Redeless, Cnut, Harold Harefoot, and Edward the Confessor, he borrows from the clearly arranged narrative of Simeon, showing, however, in his treatment of the Danish kings, that

Firth (p. 248) quotes this passage, citing Hume (*Hist. Eng.* 1. 25), who, referring to the figure of the kites and crows, declares it natural that the "great learning and vigorous imagination of Milton" could not contend with the task of bringing orderly arrangement out of the confused transactions and battles of the Saxon Heptarchy." Green remarks that Milton "scorned" as battles of the kites and crows the interesting and significant "struggles of Northumbrian, Mercian, and West Saxon kings to establish their supremacy over the general mass of Englishmen" (*Making of Eng.*, ed. 1882, p. 245). Plummer, citing Lappenberg, is disposed to connect the passage, "which for long did so much harm to the study of early English history," with the report, by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, of the murder of the birds in 671 (*Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 2.29). See also Lappenberg, *A History of England under the Anglo-Saxon Kings*, ed. 1881 (trans. Thorpe), 1. 291-2.

⁵⁰ Pp. 327 ff.

⁵¹ In illustration of a close use of the *Chronicle*, observe the following (the Latin is Wheloc's):

Tum perquam cito postea populus multus, cum de Cantio, tum de Suthregia, & East-Saxonia, tum de proximis urbibus collectus, Colecestriam quoque adibat & obsidebat: tamque diu impugnabat, donec expugnabat: & populum illum totum occidebat: (quicquid autem intus erat, diripiebat;) hominibus exceptis, qui murum transilientes aufugerant: verum etiam postea, hac eadem æstate magnus exercitus East-anglorum, cum agros quidem tum portus incolentium se in auxilium conglomerarunt; arbitrati quoque posse suam ulcisci injuriam. Melodunum itaque profecti: urbemque obsidentes, & impugnantes (*Sax. Chron.*, ed. Wheloc, p. 553).

Encouraged by this, the men of Kent, Surrey, and part of Essex, enterprise the siege of Colchester, nor gave over till they won it, sacking the town and putting to sword all the Danes therein, excepting some who escaped over the wall. To the succour of these a great number of Danes inhabiting ports and other towns in the East-Angles united their force; but coming too late, as in revenge beleaguered Maldon (p. 330).

he esteems the *Encomium Emmæ* a source to be reckoned with.⁵² When occasion warrants the relating of personal anecdotes, or the recounting of picturesque and dramatic scenes, he acknowledges the skill of Malmesbury and Huntingdon, both excellent story-tellers, who furnish him with the gossip and the color necessary for such portions of his narrative as the adventures of Edgar,⁵³ the Battle of Brunan-

⁵² Pp. 364 ff. On p. 368, for instance, under the year 1036, Simeon and the *Encomium Emmæ* are used collaterally (see Simeon 2. 158-9; *Enc. Emmæ, Scriptores Rerum Danicarum Medii Ævi* 2. 497-8). An example of Milton's more faithful use of Simeon follows:

Anno MXLII. Rex Anglorum Heard-
ecanutus, dum in convivio, in quo
Osgodus Clapa, magnæ vir potentiæ,
filiam suam Githam Danico et præ-
potenti viro Tovio, Prudan cogno-
mento, in loco qui dicitur Lam-
lithe, magna cum lætitia tradebat
nuptui, lætus, sospes, et hilaris cum
sponsa prædicta et quibusdam viris
bibens staret, repente inter biben-
dum miserabili casu ad terram cor-
ruit, et sic mutus permanens VI.
idus Junii feria iii. expiravit, et in
Wintoniam delatus juxta patrem
suum regem Canutum est tumulatus
(Simeon 2. 162).

But Hardecnute the year following,
at a feast wherein Osgod a great
Danish lord gave his daughter in
marriage at Lambeth to Prudon
another potent Dane, in the midst
of his mirth, sound and healthful
to sight, while he was drinking fell
down speechless, and so dying, was
buried at Winchester beside his
father (p. 371).

Observe, also, the following:

Ille vero fugæ præsidio celeriter
arrepto, versus austrum cursum
dirigens, brevi Sandicum ad portum
est appulsus, et obsides qui de tota
Anglia patri suo dati fuerant in
terram exposuit, illorumque mani-
bus truncatis, auribus amputatis,
naribus præscissis abire permisit,
et deinceps profectus est Dane-
marchiam, anno sequenti reversurus
(Simeon 2. 147).

Canute in all haste sailing back to
Sandwich, took the hostages given
to his father from all parts of Eng-
land, and with slit noses, ears
cropped, and hands chopped off,
setting them ashore, departed into
Denmark (p. 357).

Writing of the persecution and killing of Archbishop Alfage, Milton says (p. 355): "One Thurn, a converted Dane, pitying him half dead, to put him out of pain, with a pious impiety, at one stroke of his axe on the head dispatched him." Firth (*Proc. Brit. Acad.* 1907-8, p. 246) seems to imply that the imaginative phrase, "with a pious impiety," is Milton's own. It was borrowed, however, from Florence's and Simeon's "impia motus pietate" (Florence of Worcester, ed. Thorpe, 1. 165; Simeon 2. 144).

⁵³ Pp. 342 ff.

burgh,⁵⁴ Cnut's lesson to flatterers,⁵⁵ Harold's visit to Normandy,⁵⁶ and the battle of Hastings.⁵⁷ But at almost any juncture he is likely to consult the pages of Ethelwerd, or Ingulf, or Florence, or Hoveden. Eadmer, Brompton, Ælred's *Vita Edwardi*, the laws of Edward the Confessor, and Matthew Paris, receive smaller recognition.⁵⁸

The eclectic habit of mind illustrated when Milton handles a period in which several sources compete has both good and bad phases. Its advantage is that the author is led to consult an authority up to the full measure of what it can profitably bestow. Milton can be depended upon, for instance, not to exclude Asser in favor of the *Chronicle*, or Bede in favor of Malmesbury. His judgment as to the comparative value of the sources before him is, generally speaking, that of a sound critic; and when he excerpts from one or another, his reader may feel assured that he has a sufficient reason. The vice in this eclectic temper is that it produces bewildering effects. In Milton's zealous endeavor to ascertain where his authorities are honest and accurate, and where they are deceptive and heedless, he too frequently forgets to construct a theory of his own. He seldom has difficulty in picking them apart; yet it rarely occurs to him to gather the fragments into orderly array. Though he shows every sign of knowing what the principal writers say about the reputed British birth of Constantine,⁵⁹ he expresses no settled opinion himself. In his closely crowded narrative of the wars and genealogies of the Heptarchy;⁶⁰ in his statement of the stories associated with Æthelstan;⁶¹ in his discussion of Harold Harefoot's origin,⁶² and of the relations between Edward the

⁵⁴ Pp. 334-5.

⁵⁵ Pp. 367-8. See below pp. 135-6.

⁵⁶ Pp. 384-5.

⁵⁷ Pp. 390 ff.

⁵⁸ Pp. 347, 358, 360, 368, 384, 388.

⁵⁹ P. 228.

⁶⁰ Pp. 301 ff.

⁶¹ Pp. 332 ff.

⁶² P. 368.

Confessor and Duke William;⁶³ and, in short, in many passages where the sources conflict, Milton leaves his reader with the sense that the subject has been abandoned prematurely.⁶⁴ The investigator, it is felt, has performed his labor; as artist and critical collator, however, he has been neglectful.

The objection that Milton is disposed to leave matters half-determined applies in far less degree to his chronology.⁶⁵ Contradictions in dates are not so likely to impede him as discrepancies in incidents. In spite of Huntingdon's assertion as to the time of the founding of the East-Saxon kingdom, he adheres to his own conclusion that it was not long after the origin of the East-Anglian;⁶⁶ even the authority of Tacitus cannot satisfy him that Caractacus resisted the Romans nine years, for a "truer computation" reveals that it was only seven.⁶⁷ Milton's chronology is, in large outline, confirmed by later historians.⁶⁸ There is some interest, however,

⁶³ Pp. 384-5.

⁶⁴ Cf. Stern, *Milton und seine Zeit*, bk. 4, 136: "Man sollte wünschen, dass die Kritik Milton's sich hie und da nicht bloss auf eine bequeme Negative beschränkt hätte . . . Er überlässt es häufig dem Leser, sich selbst ein Urtheil zu bilden und begnügt sich, die verschiedenen einander widersprechenden Ueberlieferungen neben einander zu stellen."

⁶⁵ He disclaims any settled opinion as to the chronology of the legendary period. "Nor have I stood with others computing or collating years and chronologies," he asserts, "lest I should be vainly curious about the time and circumstance of things, whereof the substance is so much in doubt" (p. 184). Holinshed, on the other hand, says that "Brennus and Belinus began to reigne jointlie as kings in Britaine, in the yeare of the world 3574" (*Chronicles*, ed. 1807-8, 1. 452). Stow assigns the beginning of Loocrine's reign to 1084 B.C. (*Annales*, ed. 1631, p. 9).

⁶⁶ P. 257.

⁶⁷ P. 204.

⁶⁸ There are, of course, some inaccuracies. In certain cases Milton erred in his copying. The date 629 (p. 280), for example, should be 628, as it appears in the source (see *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Wheloc, p. 514). See also *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 1. 24, and cf. Hodgkin, *Hist. of Eng.*, p. 161. 855, which appears on p. 199 of the first edition, should obviously be 865 (the editor of the Bohn edition has substituted the correct date). Again, the date 953 (p. 339) should be 952, as it appears in Twysden's edition of Simeon, which Milton obviously used at this point (see Simeon 2. 952, and cf. *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 2. 148 and Hodgkin, p. 342). The marginal note (see 1st ed., p. 235; Bohn, p. 311) indicating that the date 974 was derived from the *Chronicle* is wrong, for there is no entry for

that year in any MS. Milton perhaps inferred the date from Malmesbury's account of Edgar's ride on the Dee River (*Gesta Regum*, ed. Stubbs, 1. 165).

In other cases Milton was faithful to his source, but copied dates which have since been rejected. The date 681 (p. 289), for instance, which was derived from Wheloc, p. 517, is more probably 682 (see *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 1. 38-9). As to the date 775 (p. 299), copied from Wheloc, p. 524, see *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 1. 50-1; *ibid.* 2. 53-4; Hodgkin, p. 250. The date 837 (p. 310) should be 840 (see *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 2. 76; on the subject of dislocation of dates in the *Chronicle* from 754 to 839, and especially as to this date, see Theopold, *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Quellen zur Angelsächsischen Geschichte*, p. 43; on the general topic, see *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 2. ciii). The date 854 (p. 312), taken from Wheloc, p. 530, should be 855 (see *Sax. Chron.* 1. 66-7), and 907 (p. 327) should be 906 (see Lappenberg, *Hist. of Eng. under the Anglo-Saxon Kings*, ed. 1881 (trans. Thorpe), 2. 106; *Sax. Chron.* 1. 94-5). 938 (the date appears on p. 225 of the first edition, but is omitted in the Behn edition) should be 937 (see *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 1. 107; Hodgkin, p. 334).

Milton struggles to identify the battle of Cerdicesleah, in 527, with the fight at Mount Badon (see p. 260). For Cerdic, he argues, having abandoned his campaigns "on the continent," as well as his conquest of the Isle of Wight, must have been defeated by the Britons. There was a British victory at Badon, he adds, and that was surely the battle of Cerdicesleah. The weight of the evidence is, however, against Milton's theory. The date assigned by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to Cerdic's battle—527—is probably reliable, and the *Annales Cambriae* give 516 as the year of Mount Badon, which Green and Guest would assign to 520 (see Green, *Making of Eng.*, pp. 88 ff.; Guest, *E. E. Sett.*, pp. 61-3).

A curious passage, showing Milton's extreme care, appears on p. 298. It is alleged that Cuthred died "two or three years before" 757, the date of Æthelbald's death. The words "or three," which are not found in the first edition, appear for the first time in the second edition (1677). The insertion, included among the *Errata* at the end of the first edition, and probably made during Milton's lifetime, was evidently intended to place Æthelbald's death at the correct distance from Cuthred's, in 754 (see p. 297). There is some uncertainty as to the date 757 (see *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 2. 47). Milton himself, who found 757 (see marginal reference to sources on p. 176 of the 1st ed.) in Simeon of Durham (see Simeon 1. 41) and in the Continuation of Bede (see Bede, ed. Plummer, 1. 362), but 755 in the *Chronicle* (see *Sax. Chron.*, ed. Plummer, 1. 46 ff.; *ibid.*, ed. Wheloc, pp. 521 ff.), preferred 757.

For a typical chronological problem, see p. 245: ". . . but sallying out, at length gave a stop to the insulting foe, with many seasonable defeats; led by some eminent person, as may be thought, who exhorted them not to trust in their own strength, but in divine assistance. And perhaps no other here is meant than the aforesaid deliverance by German, if computation would permit, which Gildas either not much regarded, or might mistake; but that he tarried so long here, the writers of his life assent not." There is little wonder that Milton became confused. Usher cites Bede and Vincentius to the point that Germanus returned to Britain shortly after his first visit (see Usher, *De Primordiis*,

in making a cursory survey of his sources. For the Roman period, to which the *Chronicle*, and the Brito-Latin and Anglo-Latin writers, could supply little in the aggregate, he consults in the main the modern treatises, notably those of Usher, Calvisius, and Stow. These works, with occasional glances at Matthew of Westminster⁶⁹ and Florence,⁷⁰ accompany him into the Third Book. Commencing with the Teutonic invasions, however, he follows the *Chronicle*, though with incidental reference to Florence, and in a measure to Bede.⁷¹ In the Fourth Book, Bede and the *Chronicle* are employed together until the former is supplanted by Simeon. It is noteworthy, indeed, that from that point Simeon and the *Chronicle* furnish Milton with almost all his dates, continuing to do so until the meagreness of Wheloc's version compels him to lay the *Chronicle* aside.⁷² After 1017, he uses Simeon almost exclusively. The neat and convenient manner in which the years were listed in the margins of Twysden's edition went far, no doubt, towards inducing Milton and his amanuenses to accept the *Historia Regum* as a chronological guide.⁷³

Milton may accordingly be said to exercise a fairly keen critical faculty, both in the selecting of his authorities and in the comparative evaluation of them.⁷⁴ But he is at his

Elrington ed. of Wks., 5. 434), and in a later passage he quotes Constantius and others to the effect that he died a little after the second. Milton, however, found it necessary to adjust the British transactions of Germanus to the long period beginning in 429, the year of his arrival in Britain (see first edition, p. 104; the Bohn editor incorrectly says 426), and ending in 448 (see p. 247).

Cf. also p. 305: "In Northumberland, Eardulf the year following was driven out of his realm by Alfwold, who reigned two years in his room; after whom Eandred son of Eardulf thirty-three years; but I see not how this can stand with the sequel of story out of better authors."

⁶⁹ P. 244.

⁷⁰ P. 248.

⁷¹ Pp. 255, 261, 262.

⁷² Wheloc offers little after 975, the date of Edgar's death. Milton's last date from the *Chronicle* is 1017, the year of Cnut's accession.

⁷³ Milton used Simeon's *Historia Dunelmensis Ecclesie*, as well as the *Historia Regum*. Simeon's writings did not appear in a printed edition until 1652, when these histories were included in Roger Twysden's *Scrip-tores Decem*.

⁷⁴ An excellent illustration of the scrutiny with which Milton compared his sources occurs in the following passage on p. 378: "King Edward on

the other side made ready above sixty ships at Sandwich well stored with men and provisions." Simeon (*Historia Regum* 2. 168), who, with an incidental glance at John of Brompton, has been closely followed for the events of the year 1052, speaks of forty ships. Malmesbury, whose name appears directly at the side of this passage in the margin of the first edition, says (*Gesta Regum* 1. 243): "Contra quos, a regis parte, plusquam sexaginta naves in anchoris constiterunt." It is likely that the discovery of this slight variation prompted Milton to turn from the one narrative to the other.

See also p. 190: "Four days after the coming of Cæsar, those eighteen ships . . . were by a sudden tempest scattered and driven back, some . . . down into the west country; who finding there no safety either to land or to cast anchor, chose rather to commit themselves again to the troubled sea; and, as Orosius reports, were most of them cast away." Cæsar, whose *Commentaries* are used at this point, does not say that most of the ships were cast away. Hence this mention of Orosius' account (*Historiarum adversum Paganos Libri VII*, ed. Zange-meister, p. 378).

An interesting example of source-collation is the fixing of the boundaries of Old Saxony (see p. 248). Old Saxony, in the larger sense, extended from the Elbe to the Rhine (Speed, *Hist. Gr. Brit.*, ed. 1627, p. 286). Ethelwerd (see *Chronicorum Libri IV*, ed. Petrie, p. 501) adds that the Saxons stretched from the Rhine to Denmark. In connection with these data, Milton reads Usher's description of the narrower Old Saxony, or Holsatia, finding it bounded on the north by the Eider (Elrington ed. of Wks., 5. 447).

See also p. 284: ". . . for Beda relates him [Kenwalk] oft-times afflicted by his enemies, with great losses: and in six hundred and fifty-two, by the annals, fought a battle (civil war Ethelwerd calls it) at Bradanford by the river Afene—Camden names the place Bradford in Wiltshire, by the river Avon, and Cuthred his near kinsman, against whom he fought, but cites no authority." The reference to the Annals, as Milton calls the *Chronicle*, is based upon the following: "652. Her Cenwalh gefeaht æt Bradan forða be Afene." The mention of Ethelwerd is then prompted by the passage: "Post itaque quadriennium, ipse bellum gessit civile, in cognominato loco Bradanforda, juxta fluvium Afene" (Ethelwerd, ed. Petrie, p. 506).

The same care appears in a passage on p. 292: "Victred, loth to hazard all, for the rash act of a few, delivered up thirty of those that could be found accessory, or as others say, pacified Ina with a great sum of money." Cf. Malmesbury (*Gesta Regum*, ed. Stubbs, 1. 34): "Temptant regium animum muneribus, sollicitant promissis, nundinantur pacem triginta milibus auri mancis, ut pretio mollitus bellum solveret, metallo præstrictus receptui caneret."

Again, Wheloc's Latin is: "Hic Ethelbaldus castellum de Somertone obsidione cinxit" (*Sax. Chron.*, ed. Wheloc, p. 520). Ethelwerd says (ed. Petrie, p. 507): "Æthelbald rex in potestatem cepit villam regiam." Milton, translating both *castellum* and *villa*, writes (p. 296): "Ethelbald of Mercia besieged and took the castle or town of Somerton." Cf. p. 316 (passage beginning *the Danes, not daring*), where Milton translates *arx* (Asser, *De Rebus Gestis Ælfredi*, ed. Stevenson, p. 25) "town and castle"; p. 323 (passage beginning *and on the bank thereof*), where he translates *arcem* (*Sax. Chron.*, ed. Wheloc, p. 544) "a castle"; and p. 330 (passage

best in the literary methods he pursues when the source-texts are converted into a new fabric of his own. Here he is the artist, no less than the critic. In his use of the modern compilers, whom he consults either for general direction or for borrowings of minor consequence, there is no opportunity to give these methods free play, and little stimulus to exercise the imaginative and constructive faculties. It is when he sets out to translate the older writers—Cæsar, or Tacitus, or Bede, or Huntingdon—that both his literary scholarship and his literary art stand forth. Should any one desire to know how far freedom and fidelity may be conserved together in the translating of Latin texts, he can do no better than to compare passages in the *History of Britain* with their originals. Doing so, he discerns the fine quality of Milton's feeling for both Latin and English idiom, and the subtle adaptability with which he could bear both in mind at one time; his alert sense of the proper scope of condensation and amplification; and his intense interest in translation as an art. It is not word by word that he follows his sources, nor line by line; but with a certain flexible sympathy that catches the whole meaning of entire passages, suffusing them, in the process, with independent charm.⁷⁵ The boy who wrote Latin poems at Cambridge is reflected in the mature author of the *History of Britain*.

In order to illustrate Milton's rendering of the Latin texts, I have chosen a few specimens, which show both original and

beginning *whereupon the English, from towns and cities*), where he translates *burgum* (ed. Wheloc, p. 552) "town and castle."

For miscellaneous collations, see p. 189 (on Cæsar's landing in Britain); p. 219 (on the events succeeding Agricola's governorship); pp. 220-1 (on the historicity of King Lucius); p. 250 (on the aggressions of the Scots and Picts); p. 252 (on Guortimer's encounters with the Saxons); p. 256 (on King Nazaleod); p. 258 (a comparison of Gildas with the "Saxon relators"); p. 295 (a comparison of Bede with the *Chronicle*); p. 305 (on the period of Eanred's reign); p. 309 (on the extent of the slaughter at the Carr River); p. 324 (on the nomenclature of Brunanburh); p. 342 (on Edgar's dominion); p. 349 (on Æthelred's entertainment of Anlaf); p. 361 (on the alleged identity of "Sherastan" and "Scorastan"); p. 364 (on the manner of Eadric's death); p. 370 (on the place of Harold Harefoot's death); and p. 384 (on Tostig's revenge).

⁷⁵ In general, Milton's translations are also notable for their conciseness. Compare, for example, the two translations below. The original,

adaptation, and which I now submit. The following translation of Geoffrey reveals the ability of the translator to convert a story told in the ancient tongue into the "plain and lightsom brevity" with which he proposed to distinguish his version of the pre-Roman fables.⁷⁶

Post illum Arthgallo frater ejus regio diademate insignitur, qui in omnibus suis actibus germano diversus extitit. Nobiles namque ubique laborabat deponere, et ignobiles exaltare, divitibus quibusque sua auferre, infinitos thesauros accumulans. Quod heroes regni diutius ferre recusantes, insurrexerunt in illum, et a solio regio deposuerunt. Exerexit exinde Elidurum fratrem ejus, qui postea propter misericordiam, quam in fratrem fecit, Pius vocatus fuit: nam cum regnum emenso quin

Archigallo, the second brother, followed not his example; but depressed the ancient nobility; and, by peeling the wealthier sort, stuffed his treasury, and took the right way to be deposed.

Elidure, the next brother, surnamed the Pious, was set up in his place: a mind so noble, and so moderate, as almost is incredible to have been ever found. For, having held the sceptre five years, hunting one day in the forest of Calater, he chanced to meet his deposed brother, wandering in a

which is an extract from a purported letter of Queen Emma in the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* (see *Scriptores Rerum Danicarum Medii Aevi* 2. 497), reads: "Miror quid capetis consilii, dum sciatis, intermissionis vestrae dilatione, invasoris vestri imperii fieri cotidie soliditatem."

Holinshed (*Chronicles*, ed. 1807-8, 1. 734).

I marvell what you doo determine, sith you know by the delay of your ceassing to make some enterprise, the grounded force of the usurper of your kingdom is dailie made the stronger.

Milton (p. 369).

I admire what Counsel yee take, knowing that your delay, is a daily strengthening to the Reign of your Usurper.

It is pertinent here to quote Professor Wendell's apt comment on the Latinity of Milton's prose: "We might study in some detail the . . . fact that he [Milton] was among the last writers of English prose who, when moved to earnest expression, instinctively thought in Latin terms; and who therefore suffused what they supposed to be vernacular expression with such sustained and sonorous rhythm as would have animated their phrases if they had actually written Latin" (Barrett Wendell, *The Temper of the 17th Cent.*, in *Eng. Lit.*, pp. 307-8).

⁷⁶ P. 165. Milton says (*ibid.*): "I have therefore determined to bestow the telling over even of these reputed tales; be it for nothing else but in favour of our English poets and rhetoricians, who by their art will know how to use them judiciously." Wordsworth, having read this passage, wrote his *Artegal and Elidure* "as a token of affectionate respect for the memory of Milton." For Milton's version of the story, see p. 182.

quennio possedisset, forte in Calathario nemore venans, obviavit fratri suo qui depositus fuerat. Ipse vero peragratis quibuscunque provincialibus regnis auxilium quæsiverat, ut amissum honorem recuperare quivisset, nec usquam invenerat: et cum supervenientem paupertatem diutius ferre non potuisset, reversus est in Britanniam, decem solummodo militibus sociatus. Petens ergo illos quos dudum habuerat amicos, prædictum nemus præteribat: quum Elidurus ipsius frater ipsum non speratum aspexit. Quo viso, eueurrit Elidurus, et amplexatus est illum, infinita oscula ingeminans. Et ut diu miseriam fratris deflevit, duxit illum secum in civitatem Alclud, et in thalamo suo oeculuit.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Geoffrey, ed. San Marte, pp. 41-2.

⁷⁸ P. 182.

Milton frequently adorns his material with effective dramatic and rhetorical touches. Compare the following:

In his rebus circiter dies decem consumit, ne nocturnis quidem temporibus ad laborem militum intermissis (Cæsar, ed. Celsus (London, 1819), 1. 183).

Further:

Pugnare adversus suos propinquos et compatriotas pene omnes abhorrebant (Simeon of Durham, ed. Arnold, 2. 169).

Further:

Quod neque insequi cedentes possent, neque ab signis discedere auderent (Cæsar 1. 188).

Further:

Hoc anno de tota Anglia LXXII. millia et de Londonia XV. millia libræ exercitui Danorum sunt persolutæ (Simeon 2. 155. With collateral use of Henry of Huntingdon and Matthew of Westminster).

mean condition; who had been long in vain beyond the seas, importuning foreign aids to his restoration; and was now, in a poor habit, with only ten followers, privately returned to find subsistence among his secret friends. At the unexpected sight of him, Elidure himself also then but thinly accompanied, runs to him with open arms; and after many dear and sincere welcomings, conveys him to the city Alclud; there hides him in his own bedchamber.⁷⁸

..... and with a dreadful industry of ten days, not respiting the soldiers day or night, drew up all his ships (p. 193).

..... and the soldiers on either side soon declared their resolution not to fight English against English (p. 379).

..... for that the foot in heavy armour could not follow their cunning flight, and durst not by ancient discipline stir from their ensign (p. 194).

..... to maintain which, the next year he squeezed out of the English, though now his subjects, not his enemies, seventy-two, some say, eighty-two thousand pounds, besides fifteen thousand out of London (p. 364).

In Milton's rendering of Geoffrey's account of Lear and his daughters, special attention is called to the italicized passages.

Dato igitur fatis Bladud, erigitur Leir ejusdem filius in regem, qui sexaginta annis patriam viriliter rexit. *Ædificavit autem super fluvium Soram civitatem, quæ Britannice Kærleir, Saxonice vero Leir-Cestre nuncupatur: Cui negata masculini sexus prole, natæ sunt tantummodo tres filiæ, vocatæ: Gonorilla, Regan, Cordeilla. Qui eas miro amore sed magis natu minimam, Cordeillam videlicet, diligebat. Cumque in senectutem vergere cœpisset, cogitavit regnum suum ipsis dividere: easque tali-*

Hitherto, from father to son, the direct line hath run on: but Leir, who next reigned, had only three daughters, and no male issue: governed laudibly and built Cærlieir, now Leicester, on the bank of Sora. But at last, falling through age, he determined to bestow his daughters, and so among them to divide his kingdom. Yet first, to try which of them loved him best, (a trial that might have made him, had he known as wisely how to try, as he seemed to know how much the trying behooved him,) he

Further:

Crebra hinc prælia (Tacitus, *Annales*, ed. Furneaux, 2. 263).

..... small frays and bickerings (p. 205).

Cf. also:

Et nox quidem gaudio prædaque læta victoribus (Tacitus, *Vita Agricolæ*, ed. Furneaux, p. 148).

The Romans jocund of this victory, and the spoil they got, spent the night (p. 218).

Again (observe Milton's rhetorical independence):

Moris namque continui erat genti, sicut et nunc est, ut infirma esset ad retundenda hostium tela et fortis esset ad civilia bella et peccatorum onera sustinenda, infirma, inquam, ad exequenda pacis ac veritatis insignia et fortis ad scelera et mendacia (Gildas, *De Excidio et Conquestu Britannie*, ed. Mommsen. In *Monumenta Germanie Historica*, Auct. Ant. 13. 36).

And this quality their valour had, against a foreign enemy to be ever backward and heartless; to civil broils eager and prompt. In matters of government, and the search of truth, weak and shallow; in falsehood and wicked deeds, pregnant and industrious (p. 246).

Again:

Quibus omnibus ad velle peractis (Simeon 2. 145).

These things flowing to his wish (p. 356).

Again:

Vallum magnum imperavit (Asser, *De Rebus Gestis Ælfredi*, ed. Stevenson, p. 12).

He drew a trench of wondrous length (p. 302).

bus maritis copulare, qui easdem cum regno haberent. Sed ut sciret quæ illarum majore regni parte dignior esset, adivit singulas ut interrogaret, quæ ipsum magis diligeret. Interrogante ergo illo Gonorilla prius numina cæli testata est, patrem sibi plus cordi esse quam animam, quæ in corpore suo degebat: cui pater: "Quoniam secretum meam vitæ tuæ præposuisti, te, clarissima filia, maritabo juveni quemcumque elegeris cum tertia parte Britanniae.".... *Deinde Regan, quæ secunda erat, exemplo sororis suæ benivolentiam patris allicere volens, jurejurando respondit: se nullatenus conceptum exprimere aliter posse, nisi quod ipsum super omnes creaturas diligeret. Credulus ergo pater eadem dignitate, quam primogenitæ promiserat, cum alia tertia parte regni eam maritavit. At Cordilla ultima, cum intellerisset eam predictarum adulationibus acquiescere: tentare illum cupiens aliter respondere perrexit: "Est uspiam, mi pater, filia, quæ patrem suum plus quam patrem diligere præsumat? non reor equidem ullam esse, quæ hoc fateri audeat: nisi joeosis verbis veritatem celare nitatur. Nempe ego dilexi te semper ut patrem: nec adhuc a proposito meo divortor. Etsi a me magis extorquere insistis, audi certitudinem amoris, quem adversus te habeo: et interrogationibus tuis finem impone. Etenim quantum habes, tantum vales, tantumque te diligo.".... Porro pater ratus, eam ex abundantia cordis dixisse, vehementer indignans, quod responsurus erat manifestare non*

resolves a simple resolution, to ask them solemnly in order; and which of them should profess largest, her to believe. Gonorill, the eldest, apprehending too well her father's weakness, makes answer, invoking Heaven, "That she loved him above her soul." "Therefore," quoth the old man, overjoyed "since thou so honourest my declining age, to thee and the husband thou shalt choose, I give the third part of my realm." *So fair a speeding, for a few words soon uttered, was to Regan, the second, ample instruction what to say* She, on the same demand, spares no protesting; and the gods must witness, that otherwise to express her thoughts she knew not, but that "She loved him above all creatures;" and so receives an equal reward with her sister. *But Cordilla, the youngest, though hitherto best beloved, and now before her eyes the rich and present hire of a little easy soothing, the danger also, and the loss likely to betide plain dealing, yet moves not from the solid purpose of a sincere and virtuous answer: "Father," saith she, "my love towards you is as my duty bids: what should a father seek, what can a child promise more? They, who pretend beyond this, flatter."* When the old man, sorry to hear this, and wishing her to recall those words, persisted asking; with a loyal sadness at her father's infirmity, but something, on the sudden, harsh, and glancing rather at her sisters than speaking her own mind, "Two ways only," saith she, "I have to an-

distulit: "Quia in tantum senectutem patris tui sprevisti, ut vel eo amore, quo me sorores tuæ diligunt, dedignata es diligere, et ego te dedignabor, nec usquam in regno meo cum tuis sororibus partem habebis. . . . Non dico tamen, cum filia mea sis, quin te externe alicui (si illum fortuna obtulerit) uterunque maritem. Illud autem affirmo, quod numquam eo honore quo sorores tuas te maritare laborabo. Quippe cum te lucusque plus quam ceteras dilexerim: tu vero me minus quam ceteræ diligas." . . . Nec mora: consilio procerum regni dedit prædictas puellas duas duobus ducibus, Cornubiæ videlicet et Albaniae cum medietate tantum insulæ: dum ipse viveret. Post obitum autem ejus totam monarchiam Britanniae eisdem concessit habendam.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Geoffrey, pp. 24-6.

⁸⁰ Pp. 175-6.

Imaginative ardor obtains freer rein in the metrical rendering of the oracular verses delivered to the legendary Brutus by Diana. The source and the translation follow:

Brute, sub occasu solis trans Gallica regna,
Insula in Oceano est undique clausa mari:
Insula in Oceano est habitata Gigantibus olim,
Nunc deserta quidem: gentibus apta tuis.
Hanc pete; namque tibi sedes erit illa perennis:
Hic fiet natis altera Troja tuis:
Hic de prole tua reges nascentur: et ipsis
Totius terræ subditus orbis erit
(Geoffrey, p. 13).

Brutus, far to the west, in th' ocean wide,
Beyond the realm of Gaul, a land there lies,
Seagirt it lies, where giants dwelt of old,
Now void it fits thy people; thither bend
Thy course, there shalt thou find a lasting seat,
Where to thy sons another Troy shall rise;
And kings be born of thee, whose dreaded might
Shall awe the world, and conquer nations bold (p. 171).

Of somewhat like interest is the translation of the Latin couplet disclosing the murder of Kenelm, and found by Milton in the *Flores Histori-*

swer what you require me: the former, your command is, I should recant; accept then this other which is left me; look how much you have, so much is your value, and so much I love you." "Then hear thou," quoth Leir, now all in passion, "what thy ingratitude hath gained thee: because thou hast not revered thy aged father equal to thy sisters, part in my kingdom, or what else is mine, reckon to have none." And, without delay, gives in marriage his other daughters, Gonorill to Maglannus duke of Albania, Regan to Henninus duke of Cornwall; with them in present half his kingdom; the rest to follow at his death.⁸⁰

In the ensuing, Milton blends his own characteristic fluency with Caesar's plain directness.

At illi, intermisso spatio, imprudentibus nostris atque occupatis in munitione castrorum, subito se ex sylvis eiecerunt, impetuque in eos facto, qui erant in statione pro castris collocati, acriter pugnaverunt: dualusque missis subsidio cohortibus a Cæsare, atque his primis legionum duarum, cum hæ perexiguo intermisso loci spatio inter se, constitissent, novo genere pugnae perterritis nostris, per medios audacissime perruperunt, sequæ inde incolumes receperunt.⁸¹

Here the British horse and charioteers...after some pause, while Cæsar, who thought the day's work had been done, was busied about the intrenching of his camp, march out again, give fierce assault to the very stations of his guards and sentries; and while the main cohorts of two legions, that were sent to the alarm, stood within a small distance of each other, terrified at the newness and boldness of their fight, charged back again through the midst, without the loss of a man.⁸²

Milton frequently condenses, and with considerable discrimination. Compare the extracts below, with special reference to the italicized passages.

Ceterum animorum provincie prudens, simulque doctus per aliena experimenta parum profici armis, si iniuriæ sequerentur, causas bellorum statuit excidere. a se suisque orsus primum domum suam coëreuit, quod plerisque haud minus arduum est quam provinciam regere. *nihil per liberos servosque publicæ rei, non studiis privatis nec ex commendatione aut*

But by far not so famous was Agricola in bringing war to a speedy end, as in cutting off the causes from whence war arises. For he knowing that the end of war was not to make way for injuries in peace, began reformation from his own house; permitted not his attendants and followers to sway, or have to do at all in public affairs: lays on with equal-

arum of the imaginary Matthew of Westminster. The couplet reads (*Flor. Hist.* 1. 412):

In elenc sub spina jacet in convalle bovina,
Vertice privatus, Kenelmus rege creatus.

Milton's translation is (p. 306):

Low in the mead of kine under a thorn,
Of head bereft, lieth poor Kenelm kingborn.

For a more prosaic treatment, compare Speed, *Hist. Gr. Brit.*, ed. 1627, p. 322.

⁸¹ Cæsar, ed. Celsus, 1. 187.

⁸² P. 194.

*precibus centurionem militesve as-
cire, sed optimum quemque fidissi-
mum putare. omnia scire, non
omnia exsequi. parvis peccatis
veniam, magnis severitatem com-
modare; nec pœna semper, sed sæ-
pius pœnitentia contentus esse; of-
ficiis et administrationibus potius
non peccaturos præponere, quam
damnare cum peccassent. frumen-
ti et tributorum exactionem æqual-
tate munerum mollire, circumcisis
quæ in quæstum reperta ipso tri-
buto gravius tolerabantur. nani-
que per ludibrium adsidere clausis
horreis et emere ultro frumenta ac
ludere pretio cogebantur. divortia
itinerum et longinquitas regionum
indicebatur, ut civitates proximis
hibernis in remota et avia defer-
rent, donec quod omnibus in
promptu erat paucis lucrosum fier-
et.*

*Hæc primo statim anno compri-
mendo egregiam famam paci cir-
cumdedit, quæ vel incuria vel in-
tolerantia priorum haud minus
quam bellum timebatur. sed ubi
æstas advenit, contracto exercitu
multus in agmine, laudare modes-
tiam, disiectos coercere; loca cas-
tris ipse capere, astuaria ac silvas
ipse prætemptare; et nihil interim
apud hostis quietum pati, quo min-
us subitis excursibus popularetur;
atque ubi satis terruerat, parcendo
rursus invitamenta pacis ostentare.
quibus rebus multæ civitates, quæ
in illum diem ex arquo egerant
datis obsidibus iram posuere, et
præsiidiis castellisque circumdata
sunt tanta ratione curaque, ut nul-
la ante Britannia nova pars pariter
illacessita transierit.*

Sequens hiems saluberrimis con-

ity the proportions of corn and
tribute that were imposed; takes
off exactions, and the fees of en-
croaching officers, heavier than the
tribute itself. For the countries
had been compelled before, to sit
and wait the opening of public
granaries, and both to sell and to
buy their corn at what rate the
publicans thought fit; the purvey-
ors also commanding when they
pleased to bring it in, not to the
nearest, but still to the remotest
places, either by the compounding
of such as would be excused, or by
causing a dearth, where none was,
made a particular gain. These
grievances and the like, he in the
time of peace removing, brought
peace into some credit; which be-
fore, since the Romans coming,
had as ill a name as war. *The
summer following, Titus then em-
peror, he so continually with in-
roads disquieted the enemy over all
the isle, and after terror so allur-
ed them with his gentle demean-
our, that many cities which till
that time would not bend, gave
hostages, admitted garrisons, and
came in voluntarily.* The winter
he spent all in worthy actions;
teaching and promoting like a
public father the institutes and
customs of civil life. The inhabi-
tants rude and scattered, and by
that the proner to war, he so per-
suaded to build houses, temples,
and seats of justice; and by prais-
ing the forward, quickening the
slow, assisting all, turned the
name of necessity into an emula-
tion. He caused moreover the
noblemen's sons to be bred up in
liberal arts; and by preferring the

siliis absumpta. namque ut homines dispersi ac rudes eoque in bella faciles quieti et otio per voluptates adsuescerent, hortari privatim, adiuuare publice, ut templorum fora domos extruerent, laudando promptos et castigando segnes: ita honoris æmulatio pro necessitate erat. iam vero principum filios liberalibus artibus erudire, et ingenia Britannorum studiis Gallorum anteferre, ut qui modo linguam Romanam abnuebant, eloquentiam concupiscerent. inde etiam habitus nostri honor et frequens toga. paulatimque discessum ad delinimenta vitiorum, porticus et balinea et conviviorum elegantiam. idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset.⁸³

wits of Britain before the studies of Gallia, brought them to affect the Latin eloquence, who before hated the language. Then were the Roman fashions imitated, and the gown; after a while the incitements also and materials of vice, and voluptuous life, proud buildings, baths, and the elegance of banqueting; which the foolisher sort called civility, but was indeed a secret art to prepare them for bondage.⁸⁴

It is interesting to notice the graceful ease with which he weaves his own comment on Redwald's attitude towards religion into the straightforward account of the *Ecclesiastical History*.

Et quidem pater eius Reduvald iam dudum in Cantia sacramentis Christianæ fidei inbutus est, sed frustra; nam rediens domum ab uxore sua et quibusdam peruersis doctoribus seductus est, atque a sinceritate fidei deprauatus habuit posteriora peiora prioribus; ita ut in morem antiquorum Samaritanorum et Christo seruire uideretur et diis, quibus antea seruiebat; atque in eodem fano et altare haberet ad sacrificium Christi, et arulam ad uictimas demoniorum.⁸⁵

He had formerly in Kent received baptism, but coming home, and persuaded by his wife, who still it seems was his chief counsellor to good or bad alike, relapsed into his old religion: yet not willing to forego his new, thought it not the worst way, lest perhaps he might err in either, for more assurance to keep them both; and in the same temple erected one altar to Christ, another to his idols.⁸⁶

⁸³ Tacitus, *Vit. Agric.*, ed. Furneaux, pp. 113-8.

⁸⁴ Pp. 213-4.

⁸⁵ Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Plummer, 1. 116.

⁸⁶ P. 276.

Milton displays considerable skill in the manipulation of parenthetical

Although the following passages show ruthless condensation, the translator contrives to express his feeling against mediæval asceticism.

Accepit autem rex Ecgfrid conjugem nomine Ædithrydam, filiam Anna regis Orientalium Anglorum, cuius sepius mentionem fecimus. uiri bene religiosi, ac per omnia mente et opere egregii; quam et alter ante illum nix habuerat uxorem, princeps uidelicet Australium Gyruorum uocabulo Tondberct. Sed illo post modicum temporis, ex quo eam accepit, defuncto, data est regi præfatio; cuius consortio cum xii annis uteretur, perpetua tamen mansit uirginitatis integritate gloriosa; sicut mihimet sciscitanti, cum hoc, an ita esset, quibusdam uenisset in dubium, beatæ memoriæ Uilfrid episcopus referebat, dicens se testem integritatis eius esse certissimum; adeo ut Ecgfridus promiserit se ei terras ac pecunias multas esse donaturum, si reginæ posset persuadere eius uti conubio, quia sciebat illam nullum uirorum plus illo diligere. Nec diffidendum est nostra etiam ætate fieri potuisse, quod æno præcedente aliquoties factum fides historiæ narrant; donante uno

Another adversity befel Ecgfrid in his family, by means of Etheldrith his wife, king Anna's daughter, who having taken him for her husband, and professing to love him above all other men, persisted twelve years in the obstinate refusal of his bed, thereby thinking to live the purer life. So conversely then was chastity instructed against the apostle's rule. At length obtaining of him with much importunity her departure, she veiled herself a nun, then made abbess of Ely, died seven years after the pestilence; and might with better warrant have kept faithfully her undertaken wedlock, though now canonized St. Audrey of Ely.⁸⁸

matter. Compare with its Latin source the text within the parentheses below.

Cognomento quidem coloniae non insigne, sed copia negotiatorum et commeatum maxime celebre (Tacitus, *Annales* 2. 431).

But Suetonius at these tidings not dismayed, through the midst of his enemy's country, marches to London (though not termed a colony, yet full of Roman inhabitants, and for the frequency of trade, and other commodities, a town even then of principal note) with purpose to have made there the seat of war (p. 209).

eodemque Domino. qui se nobiscum usque in finem sæculi manere pollicetur. Nam etiam signum diuini miraculi, quo eiusdem feminæ se pulta caro corrumpi non potuit, indicio est, quia uirili contactu incorrupta durauerit.

Quæ multum diu regem postulans, ut sæculi curas relinquere, atque in monasterio, tantum uero regi Christo seruire permetteretur; ubi uix aliquando inpetrauit, intravit monasterium Aebbæ abbatissæ, quæ erat amita regis Egfridi, positum in loco, quem Coludi urbem nominant, accepto uelamine sanctimonialis habitus a præfato antistite Uilfrido. Post annum uero ipsa facta est abbatissa in regione, quæ uocatur Elge; ubi constructo monasterio uirginum Deo deuotarum perplurium mater uirgo, et exemplis uitæ cælestis esse cœpit et monitis. De qua ferunt, quia, ex quo monasterium petiit, numquam lineis, sed solum laneis uestimentis uti uoluerit; raroque in calidis balneis, præter imminentibus sollempniis maioribus, uerbi gratia paschæ, pentecostes. epifaniæ, lauari uoluerit; et tunc nouissima omnium, lotis prius suis suarumque ministrarum obsequio ceteris, quæ ibi essent, famulis Christi; raro præter maiora sollempnia, uel artio rem necessitatem, plus quam semel per diem manducauerit; semper, si non infirmitas grauior prohibuisset, ex tempore matutinae synaxeos, usque ad ortum diei, in ecclesia precibus intenta persteterit. Sunt etiam, qui dicant, quia per prophetiæ spiritum, et pestilentiam, qua ipsa esset moritura, prædixerit, et nu-

merum quoque eorum, qui de suo monasterio hac essent de mundo rapiendi, palam cunctis præsenti-bus intimaerit. Rapta est autem ad Dominum in medio suorum, post annos VII, ex quo abbatissæ gradum susceperat; et æque, ut ipsa iusserat, non alibi quam in medio eorum, iuxta ordinem, quo transierat, ligneo in locello sepul-ta.⁸⁷

In the following passages one may observe Milton's treatment of episodic material found in Huntingdon and Malmesbury.

Tertium, quod cum maximo vigore imperii, sedile suum in littore maris, cum ascenderet, statui jussit. Dixit autem mari ascendenti "Tu meæ ditionis es; et terra in qua sedeo mea est: nec fuit qui impune meo resisteret imperio. Impero igitur tibi ne in terram meam ascendas, nec vestes nec membra dominatoris tui madefacere præsumas." Mare vero de more con-scendens pedes regis et crura sine reverentia madefecit. Rex igitur resiliens ait: "Sciant omnes habitantes orbem, vanam et frivolum

He caused his royal seat to be set on the shore, while the tide was coming in; and with all the state that royalty could put into his countenance, said thus to the sea; "Thou, Sea, belongest to me, and the land whereon I sit is mine; nor hath any one unpunished resisted my commands: I charge thee come no further upon my land, neither presume to wet the feet of thy sovereign lord." But the sea, as before, came rolling on, and without reverence both wet and dashed him. Whereat the

⁸⁷ *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Plummer, 1. 243-4.

⁸⁸ P. 291. In the passage immediately following the account of St. Audrey's death, the translator manages to include one of his characteristic attacks against Ireland (see also pp. 197, 223; also *Eikonoklastes* (Bohn 1. 407 ff.), *First Def.* (Bohn 1. 201), *Oberv. Art. P.* (Bohn 2. 181), and *Of. Ref.* (ed. Hale, pp. 57-8). Cf. source and translation:

ANNO dominicæ incarnationis DCLXXXIII. Ecgfrid rex Nordan-hymbrorum, misso Hiberniam cum exercitu duce Bercto, vastavit mis-ere gentem Innoxlam, et nationi Anglorum semper amicissimam, ita ut ne ecclesiis quidem aut monas-terils manus parceret hostilis (*Eccl. Hist.*, ed. Plummer, 1. 266).

In the mean while Ecfrid had sent Bertus with power to subdue Ireland, a harmless nation, saith Beda, and ever friendly to the Eng-lish; in both which they seem to have left a posterity much unlike them at this day; miserably wasted, without regard had to places hal-lowed or profane.

regum esse potentiam, nec regis quempiam nomine dignum præter Eum, ejus nutui cælum, terra, mare, legibus obediunt æternis.⁸⁹

Denique in quodam convivio, ubi se plerumque fatuorum diacitas liberius ostentat, fama est Kinnadium regem Scottorum ludibundum dixisse, mirum videri tam vili homuncioni tot provincias subjeci; idque a quodam mimo sinistra aure acceptum, et Edgardo postmodum sollempni convitio in os objectum. At ille, re suis celata, Kinnadium, quasi magni mysterii consultandi gratia, accersiit, longeque in sylvam seducto, unum ex duobus, quos secum attulerat, ensibus tradidit; "Et nunc," inquit, "licebit vires tuas experiare eum soli simus. Jam enim faxo ut appareat quis alteri merito supponi debeat; tu quoque ne pedem referas quin mecum rem ventiles. Turpe est enim regem in convivio esse

king quickly rising wished all about him to behold and consider the weak and frivolous power of a king, and that none indeed deserved the name of king, but he whose eternal laws both heaven, earth, and sea obey.⁹⁰

Kened king of Scots, then in the court of Edgar, sitting one day at table, was heard to say jestingly among his servants, he wondered how so many provinces could be held in subjection by such a little dapper man: his words were brought to the king's ear; he sends for Kened as about some private business, and in talk drawing him forth to a secret place, takes from under his garment two swords, which he had brought with him, gave one of them to Kened; and now, saith he, it shall be tried which ought to be the subject; for it is shameful for a king to boast at table, and shrink in fight. Kened much abashed fell presently at his feet, and besought him to pardon what he had simply spok-

⁸⁹ Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. Arnold, p. 189.

⁹⁰ Pp. 367-8. The prefatory note to Wordsworth's *A Fact, and an Imagination*; or *Canute and Alfred, on the Sea-Shore* declares that "one or two expressions are taken from Milton's History of England." The part of the poem so borrowed is apparently the following:

Deaf was the Sea;
Her waves rolled on, respecting his decree
Less than they heed a breath of wanton air.
—Then Canute, rising from the invaded throne,
Said to his servile Courtiers, —"Poor the reach,
The undisguised extent, of mortal sway!
He only is a King, and he alone
Deserves the name (this truth the billows preach)
Whose everlasting laws, sea, earth, and heaven, obey."

Milton, rather typically, adds his own comment on Canute's lesson, remarking that the truth which the King intended to impress "needed no such laborious demonstration," and, further, that it was "so evident of itself that unless to shame his court-flatterers, who would not else be convinced, Canute needed not to have gone wetshod home."

dicaculum, nec esse in prælio promptulum. "Confusus ille, nec verbo mutire ausus, ad pedes domini regis procidit, simplicis joci veniam precatus et confestim consecutus."⁹¹

en, no way intended to his dishonour or disparagement; **where-**with the king was satisfied."⁹²

The following versions of Harold's death at Hastings show Milton's peculiar skill in selecting elements from two distinct sources, and in reducing them to a form wherein personal point of view transfigures the details supplied by the originals. The Latin accounts are those of Malmesbury and Simeon respectively.

Valuit hæc vicissitudo, modo illis, modo istis vincentibus, quantum Haroldi vita moram fecit; at ubi jactu sagittæ violato cerebro procubuit, fuga Anglorum perennis in nocte fuit.⁹³

Ab hora tamen diei tertia usque noctis crepusculum suis adversariis restitit fortissime, et seipsum pugnando tam fortiter defendit et tam strenue, ut vix ab hostili interimi posset agmine. At postquam ex his et ex illis **quamplurimi** corruere, heu! ipsemet cecidit crepusculi tempore.⁹⁴

Thus hung the victory wavering on either side from the third hour of day to evening; when Harold having maintained the fight with unspeakable courage and personal valour, shot into the head with an arrow, fell at length, and left his soldiers without heart longer to withstand the unwearied enemy.⁹⁵

In the first edition (on p. 112), the names of Malmesbury, Huntingdon, Ethelwerd, Bede, and Nennius are noted opposite the passage which appears in the right-hand column below. The left-hand column contains passages from the

⁹¹ Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. Stubbs, 1. 177.

⁹² P. 342.

⁹³ Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. Stubbs, 2. 303.

⁹⁴ Simeon, *Historia Regum*, ed. Arnold, 2. 181.

⁹⁵ P. 391.

several sources.⁹⁶ The italicized passage in Milton's text illustrates his skill in weaving and assimilating material.

Quapropter, sicut hi quibus id muneris est lascivientes arboris ramos solent succidere, ut reliquorum, vitæ succo suo possit sufficere, sic incolæ aliquorum expulsione matrem allevant, ne tam numerosæ prolis pastu exhausta succumbat: sed, ut facti minuant invidiam, sorte ducunt eliminandos. Inde est quod illius terræ homines invenerint sibi ex necessitate virtutem, ut natali solo ejecti peregrinas sedes armis vendicent.⁹⁷

Inierunt autem certamen contra Pietos et Scottos, qui jam venerunt usque ad Stamfordiam, quæ sita est in australi parte Lincolnia, distans ab ea quadraginta miliaris.⁹⁸

Et mox contra Scotos causa probationis mittuntur: tandem non morata juvenus, pectora induunt armis, temptant quoque prælia peregrina: miscetur viro vir, ruit Germanus, ruit Scotus, ex utraque parte miserrima cædes: victores post Saxones existunt.⁹⁹

Quod ubi domi nuntiatum est, simul et insulæ fertilitas, ac segnitia Brettonum; mittitur confestim illo classis prolixior, armatorum ferens manum fortiozem, quæ præmissæ adiuncta cohorti in-

The British Nennius writes, that these brethren were driven into exile out of Germany, and to Vortigern who reigned in much fear. one while of the Piets, then of the Romans and Ambrosius, came opportunely into the haven. For it was the custom in Old Saxony, when their numerous offspring overflowed the narrowness of their bounds, to send them out by lot into new dwellings wherever they found room, either vacant or to be forced. *But whether sought, or unsought, they dwelt not here long without employment.* For the Scots and Piets were now come down, some say as far as Stamford, in Lincolnshire, whom perhaps not imagining to meet new opposition, the Saxons, though not till after a sharp encounter, put to flight: and that more than once; slaying in fight, as some Scotch writers affirm, their king Eugenius the son of Fergus. Hengist perceiving the island to be rich and fruitful, but her princes and other inhabitants given to vicious ease, sends word home, inviting others to a share of his good success. Who returning with seventeen ships, were grown up now to a

⁹⁶ For passages containing the material from Nennius, see Usher, *De Primordiis*, ed. 1687, pp. 207, 239. Cf. Nennius, *Historia Britonum*, ed. Stevenson, p. 24 (in *Collection of Monastic Chronicles*, published by Eng. Hist. Soc.). As to the manner in which Nennius may have been suggested to Milton at this point, see the marginal references in Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. Wheloc, pp. 58-9. As to the Scottish authority, cf. Buchanan, *History of Scotland*, trans. Aikman, 1. 227.

⁹⁷ Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, ed. Stubbs, 1. 8-9.

⁹⁸ Huntingdon, ed. Arnold, p. 38.

⁹⁹ Ethelwerd, ed. Petrie, p. 502.

vincibilem fecit exercitum. Susceperunt ergo, qui aduenerant, donantibus Britannis, locum habitationis inter eos, ea condicione, ut hi pro patriæ pace et salute contra aduersarios militarent, illi militantibus debita stipendia conferrent.¹

sufficient army, and entertained without suspicion on these terms, that they "should bear the brunt of war against the Picts, receiving stipend, and some place to inhabit."²

When the *History of Britain* is compared with the works of other writers of English history belonging to Milton's age and to that immediately preceding it, one finds that the author has, in the large, been diligent and circumspect in choosing his authorities. There are numerous instances in which Holinshed and Speed consult modern digests totally ignored by him; but it cannot be urged that they have, on the whole, succeeded better than he in tracing their way to the ultimate springs. Bearing in mind the general availability, in the seventeenth century, of printed editions relating to the sources and literature of English history, Milton may be said to have put himself in touch with a considerable part of the entire field. If his work does not derive from the leading Welsh sources, the *Annales Cambriæ* and the *Brut y Tywysogion*; if it disregards Eddius' *Life of Wilfrith* and the valuable *Lestorie des Engles* of Geoffrey Gaimar; if, in the period of the Danish invasions, it might have been enriched through the *Heimskringla af Snorre Sturlasson*, it should not be forgotten that these writings were not accessible in print until after his time,³ and that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries did much towards introducing British and English material to historical scholars. In like manner, if his narrative of the Norman Conquest is uninfluenced by the stimulating pictures of the Bayeux Tapestry, it is to be recalled that this highly interesting piece of work was employed, throughout the seventeenth century, chiefly as a festal decora-

¹ Bede, *Eccl. Hist.*, ed. Plummer, 1. 31. See also Nennius, ed. Stevenson (in *Collection of Monastic Chronicles*), p. 28.

² P. 250.

³ See Gross, *Sources and Lit. Eng. Hist.*, pp. 237, 347, 107, 364, 255. See also Hodgkin, *Hist. Eng.*, Appendix I, where the authorities for pre-Conquest history are discussed.

tion for the nave of Bayeux Cathedral.⁴ Yet some sources there were, overlooked or ignored by Milton, that he might have used. The contributions of the Norman William of Jumièges⁵ and William of Poitiers,⁶ bearing closely on the events of the Conquest and on Duke William's career, were included in Duchesne's *Historiæ Normannorum Scriptores*, published at Paris in 1619; yet he appears to owe no debt to these writers, who, along with other Norman and Anglo-Norman authorities, have been studied with eagerness by more recent historians. Nor can it be denied that he unjustly withholds recognition from the ecclesiastical writers and the theologians. Especially as to the former, his position is outspoken; he discerns no good purpose in reporting the "long bead-roll of archbishops, bishops, abbots, abbesses, and their doings, neither to religion profitable, nor to morality."⁷ He resorts to the *Ecclesiastical History*, to be sure, but he picks his way gingerly, that he may avoid "bead-rolls" and the like. He manifests respect for Alcuin; yet instead of gaining a first-hand acquaintance, in accessible editions,⁸ with the material furnished to English history by this "learned monk,"⁹ as he calls him, he is content to know him through the pages of Malmesbury. It is certain that he had some familiarity with the early laws.¹⁰ In Wheloc's volume of 1644, which added Lambarde's *Archaionomia* to Bede and the *Chronicle*,¹¹ he might have found them in Latin parallel texts. He makes no truly earnest attempt, however, to enlist their aid in reaching historical fact.¹² Milton's selection of his sources, in a word, is that of a judicious and conservative scholar who, though in no danger of missing the great high-

⁴ Fowke, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, p. 3.

⁵ Gross, p. 375.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

⁷ P. 299.

⁸ See Hardy, *Cat. of Materials*, 1. 688.

⁹ P. 307.

¹⁰ See *First Def.* (Bohn 1. 173).

¹¹ See Adams, *Old Eng. Scholarship*, p. 54. As to the volume of 1643, see *supra*, p. 115, note 43.

¹² Such passages as those on pp. 260-1, p. 249, and p. 358 are exceptional.

ways of research, is prevented by the difficulties of investigation, by the accunulation of other interests,¹³ and by no small degree of personal and traditional prejudice, from searching out the narrow bypaths where rich yields are also to be found.

¹³ Though Milton had originally proposed to bring the *History* down to his own time, he concluded it at the Norman Conquest. The composition of the text progressed intermittently during a period commencing about 1645 (but no earlier than 1643, the date of the publication of Wheloc's volume), and ending about 1660 (see Firth, pp. 229-30). Cf. Masson, *The Life of John Milton* etc., 6. 642-3. As to Wheloc's book, cf. Stern, *Milton und seine Zeit*, bk. 4. 134.

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